

In The Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An electronic offer management system for offer transactions, comprising:

receiving means for receiving information related to a plurality of offers distributed by a plurality of different offer distributors to customers for redemption at a plurality of stores;

routing means for automatically routing the information related to each offer to a point-of-sale system of each store in which the offer can be redeemed; and

clearing means for automatically clearing the offers redeemed by the customers at the stores, whereby the offers are managed in a centralized manner through an entity different than the stores and the offer distributors.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising settlement means for automatically reconciling financial obligations associated with each offer cleared by the clearing means, whereby a single, electronic audit of each offer transaction can be achieved.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the clearing means comprises:
means for receiving redemption information from the stores; and
means for comparing the redemption information to the offer information
whereby each offer redeemed by the customers can be validated.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of offer distributors comprises at least one of an internet offer distributor, a retailer offer distributor, a kiosk offer distributor, a direct mail offer distributor, and an email offer distributor.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising activation means for selectively activating and deactivating each offer.
6. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising profiling means for dynamically profiling the customers so that the offers can be targeted to specific customers.
7. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein each offer corresponds to a reward, and wherein the system further comprises reward deferral means for deferring issuance of the reward to [a third party] the customer.
8. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising offer consolidation means for consolidating the offers available through the system for presentation to the customer at a plurality of levels.
9. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the plurality of levels comprises at least one of an offer distributor level and a store level.
10. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the offer information comprises at least one condition and wherein the at least one condition is at least one of an item purchase condition, a department purchase condition, a total purchase condition, a time of day condition and a day of the week condition.
11. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the profiling means comprises at least one of a static profile, a persistent profile and a dynamic profile.
12. (Currently Amended) A method of electronic management of offer transactions, comprising:

receiving information related to a plurality of offers distributed by a plurality of different offer distributors to customers for redemption at a plurality of stores;

automatically routing the information of each offer to a point-of-sale system of each store in which the offer can be redeemed; and

automatically clearing the offers redeemed by the customers at the stores,
whereby the offers are managed in a centralized manner through an entity different than the stores and the offer distributors.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of automatically reconciling financial obligations associated with each cleared offer whereby a single, electronic audit of each offer transaction can be achieved.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the method further comprises the step of receiving redemption information from the stores, and comparing the redemption information to the offer information whereby each offer redeemed by the customers can be validated.

15. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of selectively activating each offer.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein each offer corresponds to a reward, and wherein the method further comprises the step of deferring issuance of the reward to [a third party] the customer.

17. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of consolidating the offers for presentation to the customer at a plurality of levels.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the plurality of levels comprises at least one of an offer distributor level and a store level.

19. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of dynamically profiling the customers so that the offers can be targeted to specific customers.

20. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the offer information comprises at least one condition and wherein the at least one condition is at least one of an item purchase condition, a department purchase condition, a time of day condition and a day of the week condition.

21. (Currently Amended) An electronic network for managing offer transactions, the network comprising:

one or more maintenance files, each maintenance file including one or more distributed offers, and each distributed offer having at least one offer property, at least one condition, and at least one reward;

a router to distribute the one or more distributed offers to one or more point-of-sale systems for redemption;

a transaction log file received from one of the point-of-sale systems, the transaction log file including one or more redeemed offers; and

a server to clear one or more offers being redeemed by a customer with the one or more distributed offers, whereby the offers are managed in a centralized manner through an entity different than the stores and the offer distributors.

22. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the server is operable to receive the one or more distributed offers from one or more distributors, and to create the one or more maintenance files having the one or more distributed offers.

23. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 22 wherein the server is further operable to authenticate that each distributed offer has a valid format.

24. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the network includes a database, and wherein the one or more maintenance files are stored in the database.

25. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 24 wherein one or more aspects of the database are viewable by a consumer via a browser interface.
26. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 24 wherein one or more aspects of the database are viewable by a consumer via a kiosk.
27. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the server includes the router.
28. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein each distributed offer further includes a unique reference code.
29. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein each distributed offer further includes an identity of the distributor.
30. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the distributed offer is a consumer-specific distributed offer.
31. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the server clears the one or more redeemed offers with the one or more distributed offers by being operable to prepare one or more settlement details.
32. (Currently Amended) A network as set forth in claim 31, wherein the at least one reward includes a deferred award [and wherein the server clears the one or more redeemed offers with the one or more distributed offers by being operable to redeem the deferred reward].
33. (Currently Amended) A network as set forth in claim 32, wherein the deferred award is an award for [a third party] the customer.
34. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 31 wherein the server is further operable to communicate the one or more settlement details to a settlement agent.

35. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the server is further operable to accrue data relating to the redeemed offers, and to profile the accrued data.
36. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 35 wherein the server is further operable to communicate the profile to the one or more distributors.
37. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 35 wherein the profile is selected from the group of a static profile, a persistent profile, and a dynamic profile.
38. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes whether the offer is open to the public.
39. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes whether the offer is being offered by a vendor or a store.
40. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes the maximum number of times the offer may be used by a consumer per transaction.
41. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes the maximum number of times the offer may be used by a consumer across transactions.
42. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes the date and time when the offer becomes active.
43. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes the date and time when the offer becomes inactive.
44. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes a text description of the offer.

45. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes the unique number used to identify a sponsor of each offer.
46. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one offer property includes whether a reward is to be received in the future.
47. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one condition includes one or more items that must be purchased.
48. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 47 wherein the at least one condition includes the one or more departments from which each of the one or more items must be purchased.
49. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one condition includes the amount of total purchases required.
50. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one condition includes the one or more days the offer may be redeemed.
51. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one condition is selected from the group of an item purchase condition, a department purchase condition, a total purchase condition, a time of day condition, and a day of week condition.
52. (Original) A network as set forth in claim 21 wherein the at least one reward is selected from the group of an item discount reward, a department discount award, a total discount award, a free item reward, and a replacement price reward.
53. (Currently Amended) A method of electronically managing offer transactions, the method comprising:

electronically receiving an offer from a distributor, the offer having at least one offer property, at least one condition, and at least one reward;

storing the offer;

electronically distributing the offer to a point-of-sale system of a store in which the offer can be redeemed;

electronically receiving a redeemed offer from the point-of-sale system; and

comparing the redeemed offer with the stored offer, wherein the entity receiving the offer is different than the store and the distributor.

54. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 53 and further comprising authenticating the received offer from the distributor.

55. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 53 and further comprising viewing the stored offer via a browser interface.

56. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 53 and further comprising viewing the stored offer via a kiosk.

57. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 53 and further comprising:

creating one or more settlement details using information from the redeemed offer; and

electronically transmitting the one or more settlement details to a settlement agent.

58. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 53 and further comprising:

accruing data relating to the redeemed offer; and

profiling the accrued data.

59. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 58 wherein the profile is selected from the group of a static profile, a persistent profile, and a dynamic profile.

60. (Original) A method as set forth in claim 53 wherein the offer is a consumer-specific offer.